

to ensure all Americans have the health protections they need and access to the quality health care they deserve. The health reform law we have in place does this.

Today the U.S. House is debating the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. The Republican-Tea Party majority officially titled the bill before us, H.R. 2, the "Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act." They use the word "killing" five times in a bill that isn't even two pages long. Not only is the bill's title offensive and disrespectful, it is untrue. The fact is the health reform law does not kill jobs, its patient protections save lives and create jobs. More than 200,000 health care related jobs have been created since the law passed in March of last year.

This Tea Party Republican bill strips away patient protections for children, seniors, and adults with pre-existing medical conditions. It replaces tough legal protections for patients with a uniquely Republican solution—nothing. Republicans strip away protections for millions of Americans, add \$230 billion to the federal budget deficit according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, and restore a broken health care system which empowers insurance companies, not patients.

I want Minnesotans to know exactly what repealing the existing health reform law would do. If this Republican bill were to become law it would mean:

Stripping 32 millions of Americans of health insurance and new consumer protections;

Allowing insurers to deny coverage to children with pre-existing conditions, apply restrictive lifetime coverage limits, impose cost sharing on preventative care, and retroactively cancel a policy when an individual gets sick; Eliminating tax credits for as many as 99,000 Minnesota small businesses providing their employees health insurance;

Refusing 11,400 young adults in Minnesota the option to remain on their parents' health insurance until they turn 26;

Maintaining a perverse payment system that rewards providers for the volume of services delivered, rather than the quality of those services;

Jeopardizing the early retiree health coverage provided by 210 Minnesota employers and unions currently receiving financial assistance through the "The Early Retiree Reinsurance Program"; and

Risking the Medicare benefits and prescription drug coverage seniors and people with disabilities depend on to meet their health needs.

H.R. 2 is more than political posturing. It is legislation that sends a clear message to the American people: Republicans care more about protecting insurance company profits than protecting the rights of patients. I will oppose this bill and I will oppose and battle against every effort made in the 112th Congress to defund, sidetrack, or stall the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

I am not alone in opposing H.R. 2. Hundreds of national organizations and dozens of Minnesota groups oppose this blatantly partisan effort to repeal health reform. Here are a few excerpts from letters I received over the past few days.

The Minnesota Medical Association: "the MMA opposes efforts to repeal the ACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) and urges you to vote against it."

Catholic Hospital Association of Minnesota: "I strongly urge you to maintain support for ef-

forts to improve and strengthen our nation's health care system by opposing the legislation before the House to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA)."

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota: "We strongly encourage you to vote against repeal of the ACA and work toward ensuring that implementation includes the needs of people with epilepsy and other chronic health conditions."

Minnesota Hospital Association: "On behalf of the 148 hospital and 17 health system members of the Minnesota Hospital Association, I am writing to express our opposition to legislation that would repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)."

Today, as the debate on this ill conceived and mean-spirited bill is taking place, I received the following message from a consortium of small business leaders from across the country:

The House of Representative's introduction of a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is an affront to our nation's small business community.

The country's 28 million small businesses stand to benefit greatly from many provisions of the new healthcare law, particularly the tax credits and health insurance exchanges. These two provisions will help drive down costs and offer small business owners more choices when purchasing insurance. These critical provisions and many others would be abolished if the Affordable Care Act is repealed.

This would be a huge setback to entrepreneurs who need solutions to the broken healthcare system, not a continuation of it. America's 22 million self-employed would also suffer, as a repeal of the ACA would deny them the opportunity to pool together and purchase insurance at an affordable price through state exchanges.

It is important to remember that the Republican's dangerous and destructive health repeal agenda can only work if Americans are silent and passive, allowing live-saving rights and protections to be stripped away. Repeal will not happen today, even if this bill is passed, but over the course of the next two years Republicans and their corporate benefactors will use every legal and political channel available to deny citizens their health care rights. They will not stop.

But I will not stop either. I will not stop fighting for the health care rights for all Americans.

I urge all Minnesotans and all Americans to stand up and join me in the fight to protect the historic patient rights all citizens have gained through the Affordable Care Act and that starts with a vote against H.R. 2.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately due to massive flight delays, I was not able to be in Washington, DC on Tuesday January 18, 2011 to vote on H.R. 292 and wished to express my intentions had I been in Washington, DC.

Unfortunately, as American Airlines flight 3879 was boarding, the airline decided to hold

the flight on the tarmac during a de-icing process of several other planes. My flight remained on the ground for well over two hours past its scheduled departure time of 3:10 CST. The plane eventually took off at 5:44 CST and did not arrive in Washington until 8:21 p.m. EST.

Had I been present to vote on Rollcall No. 12, to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 292, the Stop the OverPrinting (STOP) Act, I would have voted "yes".

IN HONOR OF LIEUTENANT BRUCE
F. GUNSCH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Lieutenant Bruce F. Gunsch upon his retirement from the Rocky River Police Department after more than 30 years of dedicated service.

Lieutenant Bruce F. Gunsch was born in Lakewood, Ohio on April 23, 1949. After graduating from St. Edward High School in 1967, Mr. Gunsch served in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1971, achieving the rank of Sergeant. He earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Cleveland State University in 1976.

Lieutenant Gunsch began his career with the Rocky River Police Department on February 14, 1977. He was promoted to Sergeant in 1984 and Lieutenant in 1987.

The life of a police officer is one of true selflessness and service, and Lieutenant Gunsch is no exception. Each day the brave men and women of law enforcement put their lives on the line for the good of their communities.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of Lieutenant Bruce F. Gunsch for his exemplary service on behalf of his community. Lieutenant Gunsch's dedication to making Rocky River a safer place to live and work is honorable and inspiring. At the age of 61, Lieutenant Sharp has served and protected the people of Rocky River with courage for 34 years. We thank him for his service and wish him health and happiness.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOSEPH E.
TELLES

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Battalion Chief Joseph E. Telles for his 25 years of service with the San Bruno Fire Department. He was a past president of the San Mateo County Operations Committee and a member of the San Mateo County Communications/Technology Committee. Joe also served as the Fire Departments Liaison to the Bay Area Rapid Transit.

Joe started his career as a Firefighter in 1985 at the age of 25. He was promoted to Fire Captain in 2002 and to Battalion Chief in 2004.

During the 2009 Shu-Lightening wildland fire incident in the Shasta Trinity Forest, Joe was